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LIVE ENTERTAINMENT 7 DAYS A WEEK

PROFESSIONAL COMPLIMENTARY
PICTURES ON TUESDAY AND FRIDAY

SUNDAY:

MARRYBELL MADURO
SINGER
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

MONDAY:

ANDERSON BAHAMON
SINGER
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

TUESDAY:

JEAN PAUL
SAXOPHONIST
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

WEDNESDAY:

MAILLEYN ALVARADO
VIOLINIST
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

THURSDAY:

MARRYBELL MADURO
SINGER
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

FRIDAY:

MAILLEYN ALVARADO
VIOLINIST
7:00 TO 9:00 P.M.

SATURDAY:

RICKY THOMAS
GUITAR
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.



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Judge to temporarily block effort to end protections for relatives of citizens, green card holders

MICHAEL CASEY
Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — A federal judge said Friday that she expects to temporarily block efforts by the Trump administration to end a program that offered temporary legal protections for more than 10,000 family members of citizens and green card holders.

U.S. District Judge Indira Talwani said at a hearing that she planned to issue a temporary restraining order but did not say when it would be issued. This case is part of a broader effort by the administration to end temporary legal protection for numerous groups and comes just over a week since another judge ruled that hundreds of people from South Sudan may live and work in the United States legally.

"The government, having invited people to apply, is now laying traps between those people and getting the green card," Justin Cox, an attorney who works with Justice Action Center and who argued the case for the plaintiffs, said. "That is incredibly inequitable."

This case involved a program called Family Re-



U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem speaks during a press conference, Thursday, Jan. 8, 2026, in New York.

unification Parole, or FRP, and impacts people from Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti and Honduras. Most of them are set to lose their legal protections, which were put in place during the Biden administration, by Jan. 14. The Department of Homeland Security terminated protections late last year.

The case involves five plain-

tiffs but lawyers are seeking to have any ruling cover everyone that is part of the program.

"Although in a temporary status, these parolees did not come temporarily; they came to get a jump-start on their new lives in the United States, typically bringing immediate family members with them," plaintiffs wrote in their motion. "Since they arrived, FRP parolees have

gotten employment authorization documents, jobs, and enrolled their kids in school."

The government, in its brief and in court, argued Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem has the authority to terminate any parole program and gave adequate notice by publishing the termination in the federal registry. It also argued that the program's termination

was necessary on national security grounds because the people had not been properly vetted. It also said resources to maintain this program would be better used in other immigration programs.

"Parole can be terminated at any time," Katie Rose Talley, a lawyer for the government told the court. "That is what is being done. There is nothing unlawful about that."

Talwani conceded that the government can end the program but she took issue with the way it was done.

The government argued that just announcing in the federal registry that it was ending the program was sufficient. But Talwani demanded the government show how it has alerted people through a written notice a letter or email that the program was ending. "I understand why plaintiffs feel like they came here and made all these plans and were going to be here for a very long time," Talwani said. "I have a group of people who are trying to follow the law. I am saying to you that, we as Americans, the United States needs to." □

Associated Press

5 states sue Trump administration for withholding billions in social safety net funds

By MORIAH BALINGIT
AP Education Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Attorneys general in five Democratic-led states filed a lawsuit Thursday against President Donald Trump's administration after it said it would freeze money for several public benefit programs, citing concerns about fraud in the programs designed to help low-income families.

The states California, Colorado, Minnesota, Illinois and New York called the move an unconstitutional abuse of power. The Trump administration announced earlier this week it was withholding their social safety net funding. The funding went toward three federal programs, two of which fo-

cus on lifting families with children out of poverty.

New York Attorney General Letitia James, who is leading the lawsuit, said

the Trump administration is overstepping its authority by freezing billions of dollars in funds that were already approved for the states by

Congress.

The lawsuit filed in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York asks the courts to order the administration to halt the freeze and release the funds.

"Once again, the most vulnerable families in our communities are bearing the brunt of this administration's campaign of chaos and retribution," James said.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services this week told the five states it was freezing their money for the Child Care and Development Fund, which subsidizes child care for children from low-income families; the Temporary Assistance for Needy

Families program, which provides cash assistance and job training; and the Social Services Block Grant. HHS officials did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the lawsuit.

About half of the \$10 billion in funding targeted by the Trump administration supported California programs, said the state's attorney general, Rob Bonta. In letters to the states, Alex J. Adams, assistant secretary for the Administration for Children and Families, wrote that HHS had "reason to believe" the states were providing benefits to people who were in the U.S. illegally, offering no further details about the allegations. □



Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., attends an announcement at Health and Human Services Headquarters, Thursday, Jan. 8, 2026, in Washington.

Associated Press

U.S. intercepts fifth sanctioned tanker as it exerts control over Venezuelan oil distribution



Evana, an oil tanker, is docked at El Palito Port in Puerto Cabello, Venezuela, Dec. 21, 2025. The U.S. military says U.S. forces have boarded another oil tanker in the Caribbean Sea.

Associated Press

By KONSTANTIN TOROPIN, AAMER MADHANI, and MICHAEL BIESECKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. forces boarded another oil tanker in the Caribbean Sea on Friday, the U.S. military said, as the Trump administration targets sanctioned tankers traveling to and from Venezuela as part of a broader effort to take control of the South American country's oil.

The pre-dawn action was carried out by Marines and Navy sailors launched from the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford, part of the extensive force the U.S. has built up in the Caribbean in recent months, according to U.S. Southern Command, which declared "there is no safe haven for criminals" as it announced the seizure of the tanker called the Olina. The Coast Guard then took control of the vessel, officials said.

Southern Command and Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem both posted unclassified footage on social media of a U.S. helicopter landing on the vessel and U.S. personnel conducting a search of the deck and tossing what appeared to be an explosive device in front of a door leading to inside the ship. In her social media post, Noem said the ship was

"another 'ghost fleet' tanker ship suspected of carrying embargoed oil" and it had departed Venezuela "attempting to evade U.S. forces."

The Olina is the fifth tanker that has been seized by U.S. forces as part of the effort by President Donald Trump's administration to control the production, refining and global distribution of Venezuela's oil products following the U.S. ouster of President Nicolás Maduro in a surprise nighttime raid. Samir Madani, co-founder of TankerTrackers.com, said his organization used satellite imagery and surface-level photos to document that at least 16 tankers left the Venezuelan coast in contravention of the quarantine U.S. forces have set up to block sanctioned ships from conducting trade. The Olina was among that flotilla.

U.S. government records show that the Olina was sanctioned for moving Russian oil under its prior name, Minerva M, and flagged in Panama.

While records show the Olina is now flying the flag of Timor-Leste, it is listed in the international shipping registry as having a false flag,

meaning the registration it is claiming is not valid. In July, the owner and manager of the ship on its registration was changed to a company in Hong Kong.

According to ship tracking databases, the Olina last transmitted its location in November in the Caribbean, north of the Venezuelan coast. Since then, however, the ship has been running dark with its location beacon turned off.

While Noem and the military framed the seizure as part of an effort to enforce the law, other officials in the Trump administration have made clear they see it as a way to generate cash as they seek to rebuild Venezuela's battered oil industry and restore its economy.

In an early morning post on his social media network, Trump said the U.S. and Venezuela "are working well together, especially as it pertains to rebuilding, in a much bigger, better, and more modern form, their oil and gas infrastructure."

The administration said it expects to sell 30 million to 50 million barrels of sanctioned Venezuelan oil, with the proceeds to go to both the U.S. and Venezuelan people. □

Vivek Ramaswamy's family bodyguard arrested on drug trafficking charges

By JULIE CARR SMYTH

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP)

— Republican Ohio gubernatorial candidate Vivek Ramaswamy has expressed alarm that a man who worked as his family's bodyguard is facing federal drug trafficking charges. Justin Salsburey, 43, of Bellefontaine, and his wife, Ruthann Rankin, were each charged late last month with conspiracy and possession with the intent to distribute large amounts of narcotics through the U.S. mail.

Salsburey was employed by a private security firm hired by the Ramaswamys for protective services, according to campaign

spokesperson Connie Luck. She said that ARK Protection Group removed him from the family's security detail immediately upon learning of the matter.

According to the criminal complaints, 261 parcels containing counterfeit Oxy-Contin and other pills were delivered to the couple's western Ohio home between August 2024 and last month. Rankin has been removed from her employment as a schoolteacher in nearby Urbana, according to a statement posted by the district.

Salsburey is being held in the Franklin County jail in Columbus, according to the facility's website. Rankin was held and later

released.

"Vivek's family contracts with a private security firm for protective services and was alarmed to hear this disturbing news," Luck said in a text.

She said that Salsburey had cleared multiple background checks run by the security company, the FBI and the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation prior to his employment. The most recent one was conducted by Ohio State University's Wexner Medical Center in September, she said.

Salsburey also passed a pre-employment drug test and never failed a random drug screening, Luck said. A message left with an at-

torney who represented Salsburey in the past was not immediately returned. "Vivek and his family take matters of safety seriously

and support efforts to hold these individuals accountable for these allegations if they are proven," Luck said. □



Vivek Ramaswamy, a Republican candidate for governor of Ohio, speaks at a rally Wednesday, Jan. 7, 2026, in Cleveland.

Associated Press

Luigi Mangione's federal death penalty trial could start before the end of the year

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and LARRY NEUMEISTER

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Luigi Mangione's federal death penalty trial in the killing of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson could begin before the end of the year, a judge said Friday while weighing a defense bid to bar the government from making it a capital case. U.S. District Judge Margaret Garnett said she expects Mangione's trial to begin in December or possibly January 2027, as federal prosecutors suggested if the death penalty is still on the table. If not, she said, Mangione could stand trial in October. Either way, Garnett said, she expects jury selection to begin around Sept. 8. No trial date has been scheduled in Mangione's parallel state murder case. Prosecutors previously said they anticipated the state trial to be first. Garnett said she would issue a written schedule after looking at her calendar and reviewing notes of conversations she's had with the court's jury coordinator. The judge said she



Legal team of Luigi Mangione including Karen Friedman Agnifilo, second right, leave Manhattan federal court, Friday, Jan. 9, 2026, in New York.

Associated Press

would rule at a later date on the defense's requests to prevent prosecutors from seeking the death penalty, throw out some charges and exclude certain evidence. Another pretrial conference is scheduled for Jan. 30. Mangione's lawyers contend that authorities prejudiced his case by turning

his December 2024 arrest into a "Marvel movie" spectacle and by publicly declaring their desire to see him executed even before he was formally indicted. At the same time, they are asking Garnett to throw out two of the four charges against him, including the murder by firearm charge that has enabled the gov-

ernment to seek the death penalty. They argue that it is legally flawed. Federal prosecutors say Mangione's lawyers are wrong on both fronts, countering that the murder charge is legally sufficient and that "pretrial publicity, even when intense" is hardly a constitutional crisis. Any concerns about public per-

ceptions can be alleviated by carefully questioning prospective jurors about their knowledge of the case, prosecutors wrote in a court filing.

Mangione has pleaded not guilty to federal and state murder charges, which carry the possibility of life in prison.

Friday's hearing was Mangione's first trip to Manhattan federal court since his April 25 arraignment.

A cause célèbre for people upset with the health insurance industry, Mangione again drew supporters to the courthouse. Some wore green clothing and carried signs such as "Free Luigi" and "No Death For Luigi Mangione."

Mangione, wearing a beige jail uniform, was attentive but didn't speak once during the nearly three-hour proceeding. After entering the courtroom, he greeted his lead attorneys, Karen Friedman Agnifilo and Marc Agnifilo, with handshakes. He nodded along while reading documents, sometimes sipping from a plastic water bottle. □

Minneapolis schools will offer remote learning amid federal immigration enforcement

By REBECCA SANTANA, STEVE KARNOWSKI and BIANCA VÁZQUEZ TONESS

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The Minneapolis school system will offer families the option of remote learning for a month amid federal immigration enforcement in the city, the district said. Under the temporary plan, teachers will simultaneously deliver lessons from their classrooms to students in the classroom and at home. The district provided the update late Thursday in an email to teachers that was obtained by The Associated Press.

The move comes as the Trump administration sends 2,000 immigration agents to the area and the community responds to the

fatal shooting of a local woman earlier this week by a federal agent. Immigration enforcement in cities across the U.S. has led to dips in school attendance, according to par-

ents and educators. Advocates in other cities facing federal interventions have sought remote learning options, particularly for immigrant families that might feel vulnerable, but Minne-

apolis appears to be one of the few districts to reintroduce the option of pandemic-style virtual learning. "This meets a really important need for our students who are not able to come to school right now," a Minneapolis school administrator wrote in the email to staff.

The virtual learning option will be available through Feb. 12.

Minneapolis public schools were closed Thursday and Friday because of the tumult, but the district directed teachers to report to their school building to receive more details from administrators about the online instruction option. The district has not publicly provided details of the remote option.

In a statement Thursday, the Minnesota Department of Education said districts and charter schools can provide remote options for enrolled students.

"Plans for online instruction need to consider how the needs of all students can be met, including students with disabilities and students learning English," Commissioner Willie Jett said.

The president of the Minnesota Federal of Teachers said on social media late Thursday that the union asked the district to consider offering remote learning. "This is an OPTION and exactly what so many families need right now. MFE members brought this to MPS and MPS listened," Marcia Howard wrote. □



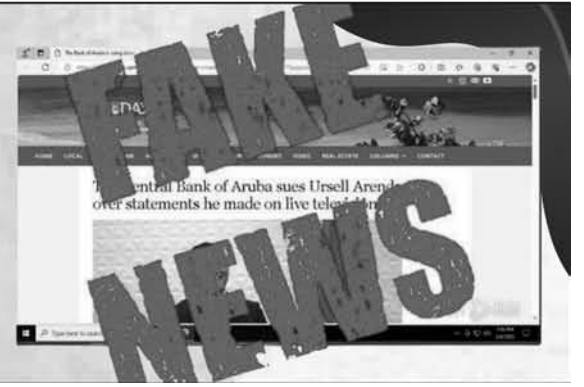
Federal agents stand outside the Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building as protesters gather in Minneapolis.

Associated Press

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Iran supreme leader signals upcoming crackdown on protesters 'ruining their own streets' for Trump

By JON GAMBRELL

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran signaled

Friday that security forces would crack down on protesters, directly challenging U.S. President Donald Trump's pledge to support those peacefully demonstrating as the death toll rose to at least 62.

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei dismissed Trump as having hands "stained with the blood of Iranians" as supporters shouted "Death to America!" in footage aired by Iranian state television. State media later repeatedly referred to demonstrators as "terrorists," setting the stage for a violent crackdown like those that followed other nationwide protests in recent years.

Protesters are "ruining their own streets ... in order to please the president of the United States," the 86-year-old Khamenei said to a crowd at his compound in Tehran. "Because he said that he would come to their aid. He should pay attention to the state of his own country instead."

Iran's judiciary chief Gholamhossein Mohseni-Ejei separately vowed that punishment for protesters "will be decisive, maximum and without any legal leniency."

There was no immediate response from Washington, though Trump has repeated his pledge to strike Iran if protesters are killed, a threat that's taken on greater significance after the U.S. military raid that seized Venezuela's Nicolás Maduro.

Internet cut off

Despite Iran's theocracy cutting off the nation from



In this frame grab from video taken by an individual not employed by The Associated Press and obtained by the AP outside Iran shows people blocking an intersection during a protest in Tehran, Iran, Thursday Jan. 8, 2026.

the internet and international telephone calls, short online videos shared by activists purported to show protesters chanting against Iran's government around bonfires as debris littered the streets in the capital, Tehran, and other areas into Friday morning.

Iranian state media alleged "terrorist agents" of the U.S. and Israel set fires and sparked violence. It also said there were "casualties," without elaborating. The full scope of the demonstrations couldn't be immediately determined due to the communications blackout, though it represented yet another escalation in protests that began over Iran's ailing economy and that has morphed into the most significant challenge to the government in several years. The protests have intensified steadily since beginning Dec. 28.

The protests also represented the first test of whether

the Iranian public could be swayed by Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, whose fatally ill father fled Iran just before the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution. Pahlavi, who called for the protests Thursday night, similarly has called for demonstrations at 8 p.m. Friday.

Demonstrations have included cries in support of the shah, something that could bring a death sentence in the past but now underlines the anger fueling the protests that began over Iran's ailing economy. So far, violence around the demonstrations has killed at least 62 people while more than 2,300 others have been detained, said the U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency.

"What turned the tide of the protests was former Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi's calls for Iranians to take to the streets at 8 p.m. on Thursday and Friday," said Holly Dagres, a senior fellow at

the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. "Per social media posts, it became clear that Iranians had delivered and were taking the call seriously to protest in order to oust the Islamic Republic."

"This is exactly why the internet was shut down: to prevent the world from seeing the protests. Unfortunately, it also likely provided cover for security forces to kill protesters."

Thursday night protests preceded internet shutdown

When the clock struck 8 p.m. Thursday, neighborhoods across Tehran erupted in chanting, witnesses said. The chants included "Death to the dictator!" and "Death to the Islamic Republic!" Others praised the shah, shouting: "This is the last battle! Pahlavi will return!" Thousands could be seen on the streets before all communication to Iran cut out.

On Friday, Pahlavi called

on Trump to help the protesters, saying Khamenei "wants to use this blackout to murder these young heroes."

"You have proven and I know you are a man of peace and a man of your word," he said in a statement. "Please be prepared to intervene to help the people of Iran."

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Pahlavi's appeal to Trump. Pahlavi had said he would offer further plans depending on the response to his call. His support of and from Israel has drawn criticism in the past particularly after the 12-day war Israel waged on Iran in June. Demonstrators have shouted in support of the shah in some demonstrations, but it isn't clear whether that's support for Pahlavi himself or a desire to return to a time before the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The internet cut also appears to have taken Iran's state-run and semiofficial news agencies offline. The state TV acknowledgment at 8 a.m. Friday represented the first official word about the demonstrations. State TV claimed the protests were violent and caused casualties, but did not offer nationwide figures. It said the protests saw "people's private cars, motorcycles, public places such as the metro, fire trucks and buses set on fire." State TV later reported that violence overnight killed six people in Hamedan, some 280 kilometers (175 miles) southwest of Tehran, and two security force members in Qom, 125 kilometers (75 miles) south of the capital. □

Israeli strikes kill at least 13 across Gaza, as Trump is expected to announce Board of Peace

By **WAFAA SHURFAA**

Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli strikes across Gaza have killed at least 13 people, according to health officials, as U.S. President Donald Trump was expected to announce his Board of Peace to oversee the fragile ceasefire.

Health officials and family members said at least one child was among the dead in northern Gaza following several strikes there as well as east of Gaza City. All 13 people were killed on Thursday.

Israel's army said Friday that it struck Hamas infrastructure and fighters in southern and northern Gaza in response to a failed projectile launched by militants from the Gaza City area.

The phased ceasefire between Israel and Hamas remains in its initial stage as efforts continue to recover the remains of the final Israeli hostage in Gaza. Officials say that Trump is expected to announce next week his appointments to his Board of Peace, which he has said he will head, marking an important step



Palestinians inspect the damage at a displacement camp following an Israeli strike in Gaza City, Friday, Jan. 9, 2026.

Associated Press

forward for his Middle East peace plan. The process has moved slowly since a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas took effect nearly three months ago.

The U.S. official and another official spoke on condition of anonymity pending a formal announcement.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Thurs-

day that Bulgarian diplomat Nickolay Mladenov would be the board's "designated" director-general. Mladenov is a former Bulgarian defense and foreign minister who served as the U.N. envoy to Iraq before being appointed as the U.N. Mideast peace envoy from 2015-2020. During that time, he had good work-

ing relations with Israel and frequently worked to ease Israel-Hamas tensions.

Under Trump's plan, the board would supervise a new technocratic Palestinian government, the disarmament of Hamas, the deployment of an international security force, additional pullbacks of Israeli troops and reconstruction.

The U.S. has reported little progress on any of these fronts so far.

Despite the ceasefire, the death toll continues to climb

On Thursday, Egyptian and European Union leaders met in Cairo and urged the deployment of the international stabilization force. EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said that Hamas still refused to disarm and called the situation "extremely severe."

Israel and Hamas have accused each other of violating the ceasefire, which took effect on Oct. 10. Continued Israeli strikes in Gaza have killed more than 400 Palestinians, according to local health officials.

The Israeli military says any actions since the ceasefire began have been in response to violations of the agreement.

Relatives and health officials say an 11-year-old girl who dreamed of becoming a doctor, a teenage girl and two boys in a tent camp were among those killed on Thursday. At least a dozen others were injured, hospital officials said. □

Mound of garbage collapses at Philippine landfill, killing 2 and leaving 36 others missing

By **JIM GOMEZ**

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP)

— An avalanche of garbage and debris buried or trapped workers in low-

slung buildings at a landfill in the Philippines, killing two people, injuring a dozen and leaving 36 others missing, officials said Friday.

Thirteen people were res-

cued alive overnight, but one of them later died, authorities said. A second body was discovered later. Rescue teams were searching for three dozen people still trapped after the mountain of garbage, earth and debris collapsed on them Thursday afternoon in the village of Binaliw in Cebu city, officials and police said. The dead and missing were all workers in the landfill and waste management facility, officials said.

One of those rescued, a female landfill worker, died while being brought to a hospital, regional police director Brig. Gen. Roderick Maranan told The Associated Press. The rest survived with injuries and were hospitalized, Maran-

an said.

The body of a 25-year-old engineer, who worked in the facility, was recovered Friday afternoon, Cebu City Mayor Nestor Archival said in a statement.

Jaylord Antigua, a 31-year-old office worker in the landfill, said that the collapse of the mountain of garbage unfolded rapidly without warning and in good weather. It destroyed his office, where he managed to extricate himself with bruises on his face and arms by crawling under the rubble and debris. "I saw a light and crawled toward it in a hurry, because I feared there will be more landslides," Antigua told the AP. "It was traumatic. I feared that it was my end, so this

is my second life."

Search and rescue efforts would proceed indefinitely at the facility, which has 110 employees, Archival and the Office of Civil Defense said.

"All response teams remain fully engaged in search and retrieval efforts to locate the remaining missing persons with strict adherence to safety protocols," Archival said in a statement posted on Facebook.

"The city government assures the public and the families of those affected that all necessary measures are being taken to ensure safety, transparency, accountability and compassionate assistance as operations continue," Archival said. □



Search and rescue operation continues after a huge mound of garbage collapsed at a waste segregation facility in Binaliw, Cebu city on Friday, Jan. 9, 2026.

Associated Press

How Aruban beaches came to be!

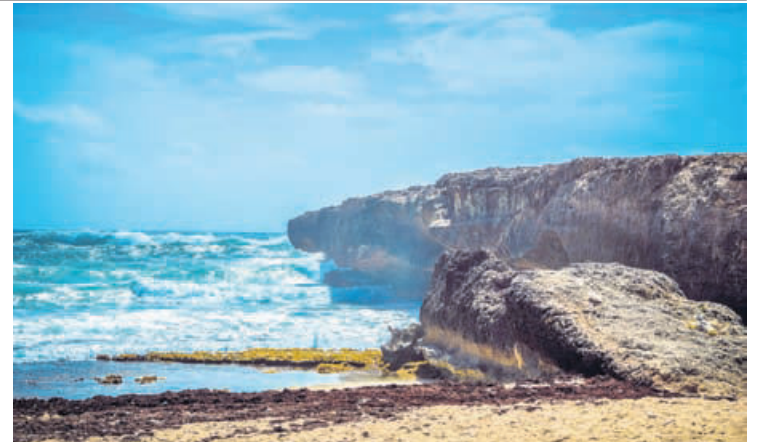


(Oranjestad)—We've talked about the best beaches to visit on the island before, but have you ever wondered how Aruba got its white, sandy beaches, and why there's a clear difference between the northern and southern shores? Here are some fun facts about the development of Aruban beaches. How did

Aruba get its white, sandy beaches?

Aruba's beaches have developed over the span of thousands of years. Waves crashing on the rocky formations along our coast line (which consists mainly of coral reefs) have started to wear and tear the reefs over

time, resulting in its gradual breakdown. Fish that feed off corals also contribute to this—one small bite at a time. Over the course of thousands of years, as waves continue to crash and fish continue to eat off the corals, sand starts to accumulate around the area. However, whether the sand



stays there is another question to be answered, and this is where we highlight the biggest difference between the northern and southern coast of the island.

The sand that accumulates around a torn coral reef is swept away along with the debris by the ocean stream. However, in areas where it's shallow and the stream is weaker, the sand tends to stick to the bottom faster. This is why the beaches in the south—the areas with weaker stream and shallower ocean floors—has sand that stretches for miles. In contrast, the northern area, where the stream is much stronger and the ocean floor

is much deeper, there is no sand present—they were swept away with the current!

Why is the north deep, but the south shallow?

Aruba is a continental island. The island actually forms part of South America, and the space between Aruba and the South American continent is simply referred to as land that runs under the ocean. This is why it gets gradually deeper in the south, whereas the ocean floor in the north runs steeply to the bottom. □

Source: archival document provided by the National Archive of Aruba (ANA).

A guide for the perfect picture: Where to find the most Instagrammable places in Aruba

(Oranjestad)—Imagine, you're out and about on the island and you want to take the most picture-perfect photo to show your friends and family back home and online. It seems like the perfect spot can be hard to find, but Aruba is full of great spots for a quick snapshot! Here are the most Instagrammable places in Aruba.

"I LOVE ARUBA"

Right on Paardenbaai Plaza, near the harbor entrance, you will spot a giant sign that reads "I LOVE



ARUBA". A great first stop for a quick shot with the family, this spot is among the few that has become a favorite among tourists, especially those that are visiting Aruba through a cruise vacation. Speaking of giant signs that read "Aruba" (because there can never be too many), there is another sign you can find along the Linear Park. It may be a long walk from the harbor to get there, but while you're at it, check out these other spots along the way!

Wooden Swing on Plaza Daniel Leo

While you're in Mainstreet Oranjestad, check out the wooden swing on Plaza Daniel Leo. This is another favorite among visitors wanting a cute snapshot for Instagram. Since you've made it this far, one question: How many blue horses have you spotted already?

Mangel Halto

For a different take on beach photos, we definitely recommend Mangel Halto! You can get in the water right by the roots of these beautiful trees (please be care-

ful not to climb them, though!). You will see beautiful skies, birds and other wildlife, and among the greenery of the mangroves, your picture is sure to pop!

Yacht Dock in Oranjestad

Last but certainly not least, the Yacht Dock in Oranjestad is the perfect spot to take a beautiful picture, especially at sunset. The dock is located behind the Wilhelmina Park. This spot offers a gorgeous view of the ocean and sunset, accompanied by the soft waves crashing on the shoreline. You may even spot some iguanas! □



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Magnet Perfume Jewelry & Cosmetics | The Lazy Lizard
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Fun facts about cacti hedges "Trankera"



(Oranjestad) – When off-roading in inland Aruba, you may notice some cacti hedges around various properties or lined up by certain pathways. These man-made hedges are called "trankera" and play an important role in maintaining our flora and fauna.

The trankera dates to colonialism, where settlers established several 'cunucu' (farm) on the island. People either used stone walls or trankera as a fence to ward off strangers and wild animals that can feed on the cunucu vegetation or cattle.

Nowadays, trankeras are less common, and those

that still stand are often not maintained. On the surface this seems like a bad development, however this proved to be beneficial for our flora and fauna. Naturally developed flora around the hedges offers more shelter for fauna. Another aspect is the propagation process. When pruning hedges, flowers and seeds were removed, which limits propagation to a minimum.

So, though trankeras don't play that big of a role in Aruba's agriculture anymore, our environment still reaps the benefits of these long-standing natural structures. □

A quick snack for the road Learn how to make the Aruban Pastechi!

(Oranjestad)—If you ever been to Aruba before, you probably heard of (and even tried) the Aruban Pastechi. Beloved by young and old, this tasty treat is a staple for party snacks, a quick lunch or even breakfast!

Here's how to make the Pastechi dough.

Ingredients:

- 4 cups of wheat flour
- 1 tbsp baking powder (if using self-rising flour, omit baking powder)
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 0.5 cup of melted butter
- 1 cup water
- 1 egg

Directions:

Sift your flour into a bowl and add all the dry ingredients before giving it a quick mix. Next add the butter, water and egg and mix until thoroughly combined. At this point, your

dough will start to get sticky; time for an arm workout. Knead your dough into the bowl you are using or on a clean surface with some flour lightly dusted until its surface is smooth. You'll know your dough is ready when it doesn't stick to your hands or the surface on which you're kneading it. Let your dough rest covered for 15-20 minutes.

After resting, divide your dough into approximately 100 gram balls and roll it flat with a rolling pin. The thickness of the pastechi depends on your taste, but the average thinness would be around ¼ inch or so.

Filling for the pastechis varies according to your taste. The easiest and most common filling you'll find in Aruba is a simple cheese filling. For this, we usually use shredded Gouda, but feel free to use any cheese that melts well when frying the pastry.

Place the filling on your rolled out piece of



dough, fold it in half and pinch the sides shut with a fork. If you have a folding tool, feel free to use it for this process. Your pastechi is ready for the fryer!

If you want to store some pastechis for later use, you can freeze them. A good tip is to place a piece of wax paper in between each pastechi if you are to store them on top of one another. This way the pastechis don't stick to each other when defrosting.

Here in Aruba we enjoy pastechi at any time of the day, but it has become almost tradition to eat pastechis for breakfast on the way to work. Many roadside snack trucks sell pastechi from early morning to noon, and offer a variety of fillings like cheese; ham and cheese; ground beef and pulled chicken to name a few. □

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Alto Vista chapel and its link to Aruba's origins

According to Etnia Nativa, in the 18th century most of the inhabitants of Aruba were indigenous who lived on the north coast, one of the largest communities lived in Alto Vista.

As they were very religious, they had a chief with the name of Antonio Silvester who guided them in the Christian life and it was he who decided to build a stone chapel with a roof of corn rods, which would serve as a place of prayer. In 1750 it was blessed by Father Algemesi who came from Coro-Venezuela and appointed Domingo Antonio Silvester as the island's first prosecutor in the name of the Spanish crown and Rome. In 1752 the prosecution passed into the hands of Antonio Silvester's son-in-law, Miguel Álvarez, who continued to guide the parishioners in their prayers.

According to the book, The History of Alto Vista by R.H. Nooyen, it is not known when Domingo Antonio Silvester came to Aruba from Venezuela. The elders believe Antonio was a Spaniard. In 1780, father Joseph Antonio de la Vegal called Bernardino Silvester, one of Antonio's sons with his wife Anna Cathalina Tromp, "neighbors and naturals of the island Aruba" and thus they became natives.

At the end of the eighteen century many inhabitants the island died as a result of the black fever epidemic and since people believed that the Alto Vista area was the most infected, they began to build their homes further south within the Noord area, so the town of Noord began to grow into a community till getting its own Church. However religious festivals continued to be

celebrated at this sacred native place, with the custom of arriving in procession to Alto Vista.

Two-hundred years after the beautiful time of Alto Vista, people can no longer see much of the town of Alto Vista from 1750. With a lot of work they found the old foundations of the Church of the Queen of the Holiest Rosary to build a new chapel on the same place. The entire surrounding area was empty and desolated, making it hard to imagine that Alto Vista was a town at all. A hundred years later, people can see the remains of around twenty houses, some made of stone and others of clay. Nowadays, only around six of these houses remain.

South of the chapel in the yard two graves can be observed, there was the cem-



etry which father Pablo de Algemesi blessed. It is not certain, but it is believed that the two graves belong to Antonio Silvester and Miguel Alvares, according to Nooyen. About 50 meters near the chapel there are still the markings of an old house, where Antonio and Bernardino Silvester would have lived. About 200 meters from the chapel there is a water tank which the locals call Tanki Cacique. In the past this tank was closed. But

mostly water was brought out from the Poz di Noord, a well dug in the sand.

The chapel can be viewed from basically any point in the north side, even from Paradera and Sero Plat. All the historical remains around the chapel provide us with an idea on how the old people of Alto Vista used to live. Don't miss the opportunity to visit a place of historical significance with a window to Aruba's past. □

Aruba to me: "Returning year after year to Paradise"



ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from Nancy and George Bascom, Nila and John Crouch from Mount Sterling, Kentucky, USA.

They wrote to us saying: "Aruba to us is returning year after year to Paradise, learning more about its history and getting to read the Aruba Today Newspaper every morning by the pool."

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! □

Sun catchers: The different lizards in Aruba

ORANJESTAD – Colorful or camouflaged, you're bound to encounter a variety of lizards basking in the sun or scurrying on their way in our island. From the charming, friendly iguanas to the good-luck gecko Pega-Pega, you're bound to meet a few of these special residents during your visit.

Aruba, as a desert island, is home to an incredible variety of unique and colorful species. Among them we can find different lizards, most of which have South American origins. But there are a few exceptions.

Iguanas



Iguanas are easy to spot, as they are larger than most other lizards and when young, have a bright green color that makes them stand out.

The iguanas usually found in Aruba are the Iguana, known as the green iguana, or locally as Yuwana. The Yuwana are a mostly herbivorous species, and can grow up to 2 meters in size, including the tail, making them one of the largest in the iguana family. As you will see, despite their name, as they reach adulthood, the iguanas can take on a grey or blue tone instead of the bright green displayed by the young ones. In Aruba – as in the rest of the Kingdom of the Netherlands – the most usual color varies from green to lavender, black and sometimes a reddish brown.

Yuwana is a protected species, as it is listed under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), meaning that international trade is regulated through the CITES permit system. In the past, Arubans used to eat a popular Yuwana soup, as it was believed to give strength and help restore health – probably due to the protein boost it delivered. However, it is now illegal to catch, kill, buy or sell Yuwanas in Aruba, and this includes eating them!

Turnip-tailed gecko



The turnip-tailed gecko is known locally as the Pega-Pega, meaning sticky-sticky, due to the way it sticks to walls using the suction in its little fingers. They are found inside houses, and are mostly a nocturnal animal.

According to Etnia Nativa, the local Pega Pega is immediately recognizable by its large size, with a body length of up to 12 cm, and its large, swollen tail, approximately the same length or slightly

shorter than its body; females are larger and more robust than males. It has short, robust legs with flattened toes and extensive basal webbing.

The undersides of its toes are covered in lamellae, which are used as friction pads to cling to smooth vertical surfaces. Some can even walk around completely upside down. Its toes are covered with ridges, which are peppered with millions of microscopic bristle-like structures called setae that attach and detach when the animal wills them to, and they never get gunked up.

They are variable in coloration, from a mottled dark gray to orange-brown, and are capable of changing color depending on their mood and surroundings. Mottled and banded markings aid in camouflage against tree bark. They are harmless and fragile; you can hold one in your hands as long as you are VERY gentle.

Never put pressure on its tail because it will surely drop as a measure to try to distract the predator, and they are different from other lizards because they're long-lived, talkative, lack eyelids, and their small scales are situated next to each other like cobblestones rather than overlapping as is the case in most other lizards.

Turnip-tailed Geckos are insectivorous and feed on cockroaches, grasshoppers, beetles, flies, mosquitoes, and spiders, which makes them the best pest control to have at home! They spend their days concealed in dark tree grooves and cavities, in narrow crevices in the walls, or behind paintings, which provide the perfect shelter for them. Pega pega is a gecko endemic to our island, but in time, some 4-5 intrusive gecko species have been observed, some of which do not cease to amaze us with the racket they make, especially during the hours of the night.

The Pega-pega *Phyllodactylus Julieni* is also a protected species in Aruba, by law. It is illegal to kill them!

Blue Cododo

These are one of the most striking lizards in Aruba, recognizable by the male's bright blue color. The Aruban whiptail lizard, *Cnemidophorus arubensis*, is a species endemic to Aruba, meaning you can only find it here on our One Happy Island! They are also recognized as the most common and populous lizard on the island. While the male is



blue with white dots, the female is brown with blue dots.

These charming lizards eat mostly plants, such as flowers, nectar, leaves and fruits, and occasionally enjoy some insects. They are selective in which plants they eat, because of the toxins present in many available plants species. The Cododo help take care of Aruba's vegetation by playing a significant role in the dispersal of seeds for certain plants: when they eat fruit, they excrete the seeds in diverse locations, contributing to the reproduction cycle of our local plants.

Striped anole

The striped anole (*Anolis lineatus*) that lives in Aruba is known locally as Waltaka or Toteki. This is a species of lizard in the family Dactyloidae, and they are native to Aruba and Curaçao. It is usually found in dry areas, commonly where there are not large trees; rather they enjoy rocks, walls or tree trunks, as they prefer to stay close to the ground.

These lizards are about 7cm in length, have a brown color with a stripe on each side and typically, several stripes on the body and tail that are lighter in color. It has a dewlap which is orange-yellow – and what's unique about this species is that it is the only known species of anole where the dewlap is asymmetrically colored, with one side being a deeper orange and the other side a lighter yellow. Mostly this is seen in the males, as it is almost imperceptible in the females. If the Toteki shows you his dewlap, retreat! This is not a friendly greeting!

Lizards are wonderful creatures that are precious to our fragile, local ecosystem. Please be mindful of these residents as you enjoy your stay. □

Images: Some images are from Aruba Birdlife Conservation.



Visit the historic museum at Fort Zoutman!



(Oranjestad)—Located in the middle of downtown Oranjestad, situated right next to the government building “Cocolishi”, is one of the oldest buildings of Aruba: Fort Zoutman. First constructed in 1796, this site has been used (or left unused) in many ways and have survived eras of war and attempted dismantling.

When anyone refers to Fort Zoutman, they are actually referring to two separate buildings that, over the years, have been merged: the fort and the tower. That's right, the iconic 5-story, squared tower was not part of the original structure of the fort, and is actually called “Willem III Toren”. Constructed in 1867, this tower was named

after the then-reigning king of The Netherlands, Willem III. Willem III Toren was originally a light tower, but after a request from Lieutenant Governor Jan Helenus in 1866, it also became a bell tower.

The fort itself was originally constructed to protect the commerce bay of Paardenbaai from pirates and other disreputable characters roaming the Caribbean Sea. Unlike the Willem III Toren, Fort Zoutman had a more tumultuous past, including the on-and-off reception of unwanted members of the English military several times (The Netherlands was at constant war with England back in the colonial era).

Over the years, both the fort

and the tower had functioned as different government center points, including a tax and stamps office. For some time these two buildings also housed a police precinct and jail, and even experienced abandonment until the Cultural Center Aruba Foundation (CCA) petitioned for its renovation in 1964, turning the site into the Historic Museum it currently is.

Despite its small size, The Historic Museum guards a rich depository of the commercial, military and social history of Oranjestad, offering a glance into how the social culture of the town came to be. If you are interested in history and want to learn more about Aruba, then Fort



Zoutman should definitely be included into your itinerary.

Saturday from 10am-2pm. □

The museum is open Monday to Friday from 9am-6pm, and

Source: The Old Fort of Aruba by Jan Hartog.

Lessons from our elders: Plants and fruits for medicinal use

(Oranjestad)— Though western medicine is now widely used for common illnesses and to keep our bodies healthy and happy, it is still very common in every household in Aruba (and around the world) to have staple home remedies that is passed on through generations. Here are some tips that our elders have passed on to us over the years.

Sweet potato

According to our elders, sweet potato is mostly useful for low blood pressure. People who suffer from low blood pressure were advised to eat sweet potato 2 to 3 times a week. However, if you have high blood pressure, it is best not to eat too much sweet potato, as this raises blood pres-



sure. Sweet potatoes are also great for people who work hard labor jobs, and it's been said to be aid blood circulation in the body, as well as help those with hemorrhoids or diarrhea.

Many of our elders opted to plant sweet potatoes themselves, mostly because of how easy it was to do so. Cut the end of a sweet potato let it sit in shallow water until it starts to sprout. Then you may plant it in the ground. Sweet potatoes need plenty of water to grow, especially in the first week in the ground. It was said that once you start to notice the ground crack underneath the flowers, it is time to harvest. This should happen around month 3.

Pomegranate

Pomegranates are also one of the easier fruits to plant and harvest. Originated from Persia, this plant

can grow almost everywhere. In Aruba, there are many homes that have a tiny or big pomegranate tree. You may be wondering what the difference is between a small and big pomegranate tree, for which the answer is based on harvest time. Tiny trees produce tinier pomegranates that can be harvested early on. Contrarily, big trees produce bigger pomegranates, but they need enough time to fully ripen before harvesting, otherwise you might end up with bitter seeds. Pomegranate trees are also very easy to plant. In essence, if you just throw the seeds on the ground, they could grow into a tree.

In terms of medicinal use, pomegranate skins are said to have a few benefits for our health. According to customs, pomegranate skin tea can help those that suffer from diarrhea. Dried pomegranate skin tea is also good for people who have worms. Pomegranate flowers can be boiled to make a drink and this can be used for irritated gums; just take a swig and let the tea sit in your mouth for a couple minutes. □

Source: Remedi i Kustumber di nos Bieunan (Medicine and Customs of our Elderly) by Dinah Veeris

CROSSWORD

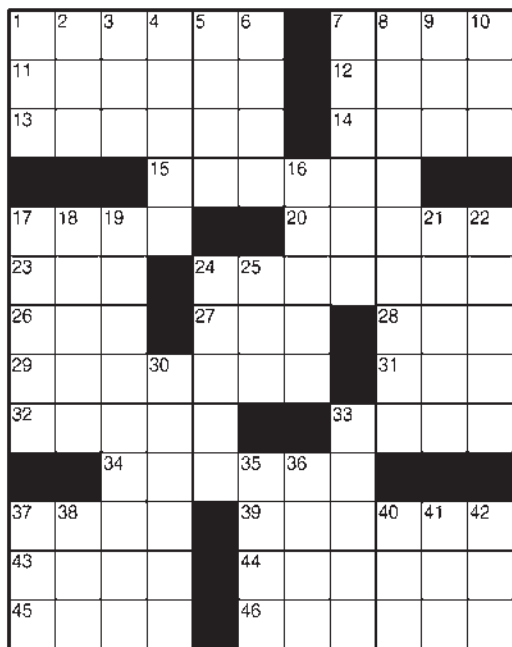
By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Lone Star staters
7 Cain's brother
11 Salem's state
12 Concert highlight
13 Coped
14 Archaeologist's find
15 City on the Passaic
17 Almanac bit
20 Assignments
23 Spanish gold
24 Discipline
26 Earth: Prefix
27 Vacuum lack
28 Low digit
29 Not neat
31 Sturgeon eggs
32 Cut's counter-part
33 Munich mister
34 Louisiana school
37 Doofus
39 Reduce to only the best
43 Workers' home
44 Concert bonus
- 45 Mid-month time
46 Like ranked players

DOWN

- 1 Male turkey
2 Important time
3 Struck out
4 Deal maker
5 Network junction
6 Skiing surface
7 Houston team
8 Reader's destination
9 Shade source
10 High tennis hit
16 Isolated
17 Mist over
18 Game setting
19 Wood-burning appliance
21 Met performer
22 Snide expression
24 Caravan creature
25 Stylish
30 Piano pieces
33 Therefore
35 Impresses
36 Muse count
37 Greek X
38 Jar part
40 Silent assent
41 Refiner's stuff
42 Tie the knot



1-18

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

1-18

CRYPTOQUOTE

PI PC YXQNIY IYQI PC ZXQN

BXQNIY QMR MTI DPXWXC

TV OTNR QMR CPNGXZ.

— KQYQIKQ OQMRY P

Cryptoquote: LET US MAKE OUR FUTURE NOW, AND LET US MAKE OUR DREAMS TOMORROW'S REALITY. — MALALA YOUSAFZAI

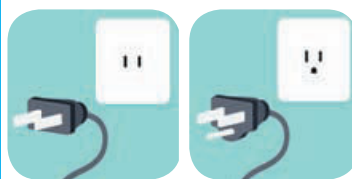


Cruise ship Schedule: Jan. 07 - 11 2026

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
WED	07	CARIBBEAN PRINCESS	09.00	22.00	B	1
		BRILLIANT LADY	10.00	22.00	C	1
		NORWEGIAN SKY	11.00	20.00	I	1
		FREEWINDS	06.00	****	E	1
THU	08	AIDABLU	08.00	18.00	B	1
		SERENADE OF THE SEAS	08.00	18.00	C	1
		BRILLANCE OF THE SEAS	08.00	23.00	I	1
FRI	09	OCEANIA NAUTICA	07.00	19.00	B	1
		MS RENAISSANCE	09.00	18.00	C	1
		CARNIVAL DREAM	09.00	22.00	I	1
SAT	10	SEVEN SEAS GRANDEUR	07.00	15.00	B	1
		NORWEGIAN STAR	07.00	19.00	C	1
SUN	11	MARELLA DISCOVERY 2	08.00	20.00	C	1
		FREEWINDS - Dept.	****	22.30	E	-

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.



Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.



Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 8 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.



Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku



Difficulty: ★★★★★

1/10

Answer to previous puzzle

8	1	5	6	9	3	7	2	4
7	3	9	2	4	1	5	8	6
4	6	2	5	8	7	1	9	3
6	5	1	9	3	8	2	4	7
2	4	8	1	7	6	9	3	5
3	9	7	4	5	2	6	1	8
5	2	6	8	1	4	3	7	9
9	7	4	3	2	5	8	6	1
1	8	3	7	6	9	4	5	2

Difficulty: ★★★★★

1/9

Musk's Grok chatbot restricts image generation after global backlash to sexualized deepfakes



Workers install lighting on an "X" sign atop the company headquarters, formerly known as Twitter, in downtown San Francisco, July 28, 2023.

Associated Press

By **KELVIN CHAN**
AP Business Writer

LONDON (AP) — Elon Musk's AI chatbot Grok is preventing non-paying users from generating or editing images after a global backlash erupted over sexualized deepfakes of people, but the change has not satisfied authorities in Europe.

The chatbot, which is accessed through Musk's social media platform X, has in the past few weeks been granting a wave of what researchers say are malicious user requests to modify images, including putting women in bikinis or in sexually explicit positions. Researchers have warned that in a few cases, some images appeared to depict children. Governments around the world have condemned the platform and opened investigations.

On Friday, Grok responded to image altering requests with the message: "Image generation and editing are currently limited to paying subscribers. You can subscribe to unlock these features."

While subscriber numbers for Grok aren't publicly available, there was a noticeable decline Friday in the number of explicit deepfakes that Grok is now generating compared with just days earlier.

Grok was still granting im-

age requests but only from X users with blue checkmarks given to premium subscriber who pay \$8 a month for features including higher usage limits for the chatbot.

An X spokesperson didn't respond immediately to a request for comment. The restrictions for users save for paying subscribers did not appear to change the opinions of leaders or regulators in Europe.

"This doesn't change our fundamental issue. Paid subscription or non-paid subscription, we don't want to see such images. It's as simple as that," said Thomas Regnier, a spokesman for the European Union's executive commis-

sion. The Commission had earlier slammed Grok for "illegal" and "appalling" behavior.

The British government was also unsatisfied.

Grok's changes are "not a solution," said Geraint Ellis, a spokesman for British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who on Thursday had threatened unspecified action against X.

"In fact, it is insulting to the victims of misogyny and sexual violence," he said, noting that it shows that X "can move swiftly when it wants to do so."

"We expect rapid action," he said, adding that "all options are on the table." Starmer, speaking to Greatest Hits radio, had said that

X needs to "get their act together and get this material down. We will take action on this because it's simply not tolerable."

The U.K.'s media and privacy regulators both said this week they've contacted X and Musk's artificial intelligence company xAI for information on measures taken to comply with British regulations.

France, Malaysia and India have also been scrutinizing the platform and a Brazilian lawmaker has called for an investigation. The European Commission has ordered X to retain all internal documents and data relating to Grok until the end of 2026, as part of a wider investigation under the EU's digital safety law. Grok is free to use for X users, who can ask it questions on the social media platform. They can either tag it in posts they've directly created or in replies to posts from other users. □



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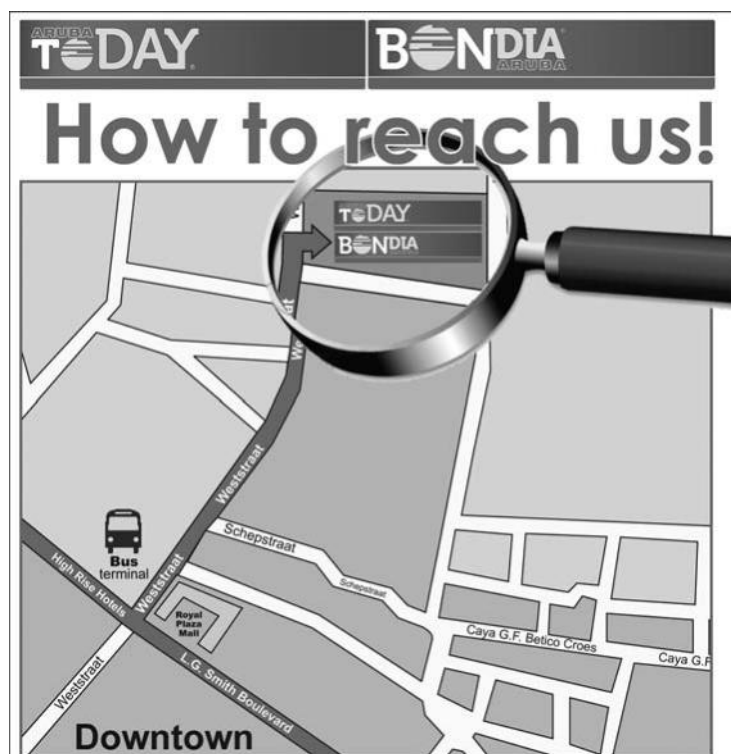
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Jet Blue	588 2244
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Alcoholics Anonymous
Tel. 736 2952
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

Movie Review: 'Greenland 2: Migration' is an unmemorable sequel with a memorably newsy title

By JOCELYN NOVECK
AP National Writer

Let's get the obvious thing out of the way first, shall we? There may never have been a better week in the history of the modern world or at least recent cinema to release a movie with "Greenland" in the title.

Just in case you're reading this from another era or galaxy, you'll see what we mean if you Google "United States" and "Greenland." Otherwise, not much more needs to be said.

Except that "Greenland 2: Migration," a serviceable but rather low-key, even grim affair starring a sturdy, understandably melancholy Gerard Butler, would make anyone want to get the heck out of Greenland not find a way to own it. That's because the movie, Ric Roman Waugh's sequel to his comet-disaster film of 2020, presents a Greenland that, like most of the world, has been reduced to an unlivable mess of radioactive ash, with life only possible in a dank underground bunker. And that's before things get even worse, forc-



This image released by Lionsgate shows Gerard Butler, foreground from left, Morena Baccarin, Amber Rose Revah and Roman Griffin Davis in a scene from "Greenland 2: Migration."

Associated Press

ing everyone to flee before a tidal wave flattens them. Hence the truly important word in the title: "Migration." Butler returns as John Garrity, and Morena Baccarin as his wife, Allison. At the screening I saw, Butler popped on-screen beforehand to welcome viewers and tell them the sequel is "just as intense, but with more emotion." That seems to be the goal, and Baccarin's main job: her Allison is the vehicle for fear, anxiety and sadness, while John is mostly the strong silent type, though with an affinity for poetry. A new addition is Roman Griffin Davis as their 15-year-old son Nathan, who's growing up in less than ideal circumstances. It's been five years since the Clarke meteor struck Earth and destroyed two-thirds of it. Images

from the first film return as a reminder the Eiffel Tower clipped in half and bent like a mangled metal toy, the Sydney Opera House just recognizable amid the ash. When we left the Garritys, they were among the planet's lucky survivors, having made it to the Greenland bunker. Now, nobody feels too lucky, though there's an effort to recapture some rhythms of normal

life: school, evening socials with dancing, exercise class. The outside remains off limits to most. John, a surface scavenger, takes dangerous trips up in a gas mask. It's a bleak existence, especially for a teenager like Nathan, who's taken to briefly sneaking out. A meeting of the bunker's governing committee, on which Allison sits, shows how precarious things are getting. "We're basically running on fumes," someone says. Besides the toxic radiation, the comet is still sending forth destructive fragments. Can we go to Iceland, they wonder? No, that's gone. Same with Canada. And most of Europe. Except, maybe, southern France. One expert posits that the impact left a crater there, a safe zone with clean air where human life can not only survive, but thrive. And where the grass is, quite literally, greener. Meanwhile, a bit of social conflict comes into play when one member suggests that a group of migrants seeking shelter be denied entry. □

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Judge dismisses Salt-N-Pepa's lawsuit to reclaim master recordings from Universal Music Group

By MARK KENNEDY
AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A federal judge has dismissed the pioneering hip-hop group Salt-N-Pepa's lawsuit to reclaim ownership of their master recordings from Universal Music Group. U.S. District Judge Denise Cote on Thursday sided with the recording giant, arguing that the Grammy-winning group never owned the copyrights to their sound recordings and didn't transfer them to anyone else.

"Plaintiffs can only terminate copyright transfers that they executed," the judge wrote. "None of the contracts identified by Plaintiffs indicate that they ever owned the Master Tapes."

UMG argued that the re-

cordings were "works made for hire," which would not allow for the reclaiming of rights. Salt-N-Pepa's lawsuit said their agreements with the label made it clear that they

were not.

"Even with the court's complete rejection of their claims, we remain open and willing to find a resolution to the matter and turn the page so we can focus

our efforts on working together to amplify Salt-N-Pepa's legacy for generations to come," UMG said in a statement.

Representatives for Salt-N-Pepa said in a statement that they disagreed with the judge's decision and "fully intend to pursue our rights on appeal," adding: "We remain committed to vindicating and reclaiming our rights as creators under the Copyright Act."

The Queens, New York, duo of Cheryl "Salt" James and Sandra "Pepa" Denton became Salt-N-Pepa in 1985. They were later joined by DJ Spinderella, who was not part of the early agreements under dispute and is not involved in the lawsuit.

Salt-N-Pepa signed with Next Plateau Records and

released their debut album "Hot, Cool & Vicious" in 1986. Next Plateau was an independent label at the time, and it's now under the banner of Universal's Republic label. Some of the group's hits include 1993's "Shoop" and 1987's "Push It."

In 1995 they became the first female rap group to win a Grammy, and in 2021, they received a Grammy lifetime achievement award.

In November, they followed Missy Elliott as the second female hip-hop act in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, handed the Influence Award.

At the podium during the induction ceremony, James noted the group's legal fight: "This is the Influence Award. □



Sandra Denton, from left; DJ Spinderella and Cheryl James of Salt-N-Pepa arrive at the 2025 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony on Nov. 8, 2025, at L.A. Live in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

Sabalenka flips the outcome with a straight-sets win over Keys in Australian Open tuneup

By JOHN PYE

AP Sports Writer

BRISBANE, Australia (AP) —

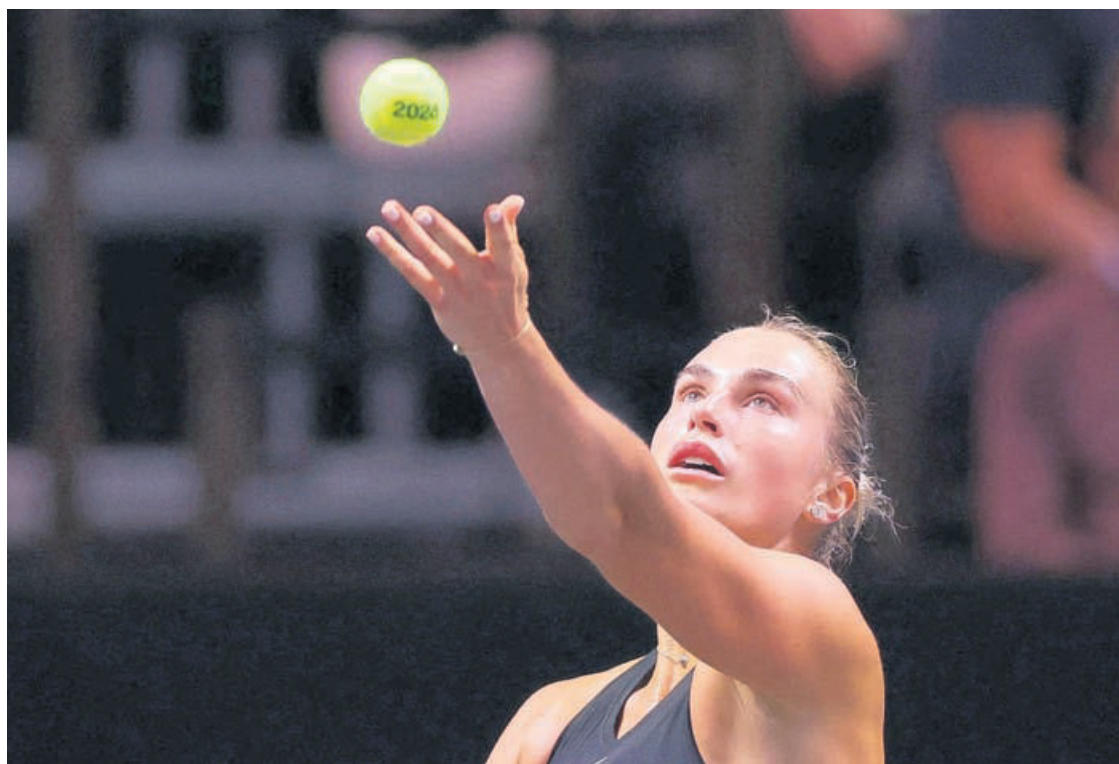
This rematch between the Australian Open finalists was lopsided, and Aryna Sabalenka flipped the outcome with a straight-sets win over Madison Keys.

Top-ranked Sabalenka broke Keys' in five straight service games on the way to a 6-3, 6-3 win in 1 1/2 hours Friday to reach the semifinals of the Brisbane International, a tuneup event for the Australian Open which begins Jan. 18.

"I didn't really have the throwback to the Australian Open last year, to be honest," Sabalenka said. "I know that I lost in Australia against her and it's a big motivation, of course, to go out and get the win."

"But I always look into the (next) match as like a new match against a new player. That's my approach."

The defending Brisbane champion will next take on 11th-seeded Karolina Muchova, who had a 6-2, 2-6, 6-4 win over Elena Rybakina to end a 13-match streak for the No. 3 seed. Fourth-seeded Jessica Pegula had a 6-3, 7-6 (3)



Aryna Sabalenka serves against Nick Kyrgios during their Battle of the Sexes tennis match, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Sunday Dec. 28, 2025.

Associated Press

quarterfinal win over No. 10 Liudmila Samsonova and will next play No. 16 Marta Kostyuk, who beat sixth-seeded Mirra Andrejeva 7-6 (7), 6-3.

Muchova has the better of the career head-to-head meetings against WTA Finals champion Rybakina. She also has a 3-1 record against No. 1 Sabalenka.

"Doesn't matter if I'm the one who is leading head-to-head or I'm the one who is losing I don't care," Sabalenka said, adding that her focus is to control the kinds of emotions that derailed her sometimes when she was younger.

"In the past, I could lose a match because I'd be so frustrated. Now I'm just try-

ing to move on like, 'OK, whatever,'" she said. "I feel like it's been working well for me."

Keys will head to Adelaide aiming to retain the title there and then hope to repeat the sequence from 2025, when she went on to win her first Grand Slam title two weeks later in Melbourne.

"Hopefully I can gain and then just keep a lot of momentum going," she said. "Hopefully there is many more firsts to come."

On a warm Friday afternoon on Pat Rafter Arena, Sabalenka got the first service break in the seventh game and then took six of the next seven games. Keys broke serve to open the second set in the only interruption in that sequence.

The 30-year-old American faced immense pressure on her second serve, finishing the match with eight double-faults and winning just 33% of points on her second serve.

Keys saved two match points in the eighth game of the second set but it barely slowed down Sabalenka, who served out at love.

Sabalenka has two straight-set wins over Keys the other was 6-0, 6-1 at Indian Wells since that loss at Melbourne Park almost 12 months ago. She also reached the French Open final, won the U.S. Open and finished the competitive season with a runner-up finish at the WTA Finals. □

Free agent outfielder Max Kepler suspended 80 games by MLB following positive drug test

By RONALD BLUM

AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) —

Free agent outfielder Max Kepler was suspended for 80 games on Friday following a positive test for a banned performance-enhancing substance in violation of Major League Baseball's drug program.

Kepler tested positive for Epi-trenbolone, a substance that led to a suspension in 2018 for boxer Manuel Charr. The U.S. Anti-Doping Agency announced the following year that a positive test for the substance caused it to disqualify 90-year-old cyclist Carl Grove from a world record he had set at the 2018 Masters Track National Championship.

Epi-trenbolone is a metabolite of Trenbolone, which is contained in some products used in body-building stores and had been used in products to promote cattle growth. Kepler is the first player suspended by MLB for the substance since public announcements of the penalty details began in 2005.

There was no immediate comment from the players' association or his agency. Kepler accepted the suspension without contesting the discipline in a grievance, a person familiar with the process told The Associated Press. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because that detail was not announced. Kepler, who turns 33 next

month, is an 11-year major league veteran who spent last season with the Philadelphia Phillies after playing his first 10 seasons with

the Minnesota Twins. He became a free agent after the World Series.

Fourteen players were suspended last year for posi-

tive tests, including two under the major league program. Atlanta Braves outfielder Jurickson Profar was banned for 80 games on March 31 and Philadelphia Phillies closer José Alvarado for 80 games on May 25.

Even if Kepler doesn't have a contract by opening day in March, MLB and the union usually allow a suspended free agent to serve his penalty as long as he is attempting to reach a deal with teams.

Kepler hit .216 with 18 homers and 52 RBIs last year after agreeing to a \$10 million, one-year contract. He was slowed in 2024 by left patellar tendinitis and had core surgery after the season to repair a sports hernia. □



Philadelphia Phillies' Max Kepler during the eighth inning of a baseball game, Wednesday, Sept. 10, 2025, in Philadelphia.

Associated Press



The transfer portal era and pursuit of NIL money are messy. Are there solutions?

By ANDREW DESTIN and TERESA WALKER
AP Sports Writers

A quarterback reportedly renege on a lucrative deal to hit the transfer portal, only to return to his original school. Another starting QB, this one in the College Football Playoff, awaiting approval from the NCAA to play next season, an expensive NIL deal apparently hanging in the balance. A defensive star, sued by his former school after transferring, filing a lawsuit of his own.

It is easy to see why many observers say things are a mess in college football even amid a highly compelling postseason.

"It gets crazier and crazier. It really, really does," said Sam Ehrlich, a Boise State legal studies professor who tracks litigation against the NCAA. He said he might have to add a new section for litigation against the NCAA stemming just from transfer portal issues.

"I think a guy signing a contract and then immediately deciding he wants to go to another school, that's a kind of a new thing," he said. "Not new kind of historically when you think about all the contract jumping that was going on in the '60s and '70s with the NBA. But it's a new thing for college sports, that's for sure."

Washington quarterback Demond Williams Jr. said late Thursday he will return to school for the 2026 season rather than enter the transfer portal, avoiding a potentially messy dispute amid reports the Huskies were prepared to pursue legal options to enforce Williams' name, image and likeness contract. Edge rusher Damon Wilson is looking to transfer after one season at Missouri, having been sued for damages by Georgia over his decision to leave the Bulldogs. He has countersued.

Then there is Ole Miss quarterback Trinidad Chambliss,



Mississippi quarterback Trinidad Chambliss (6) runs the ball during the second half of the Fiesta Bowl NCAA college football playoff semifinal game against Miami, Thursday, Jan. 8, 2026, in Glendale, Ariz.

who reportedly had a new NIL deal waiting while he asked the NCAA for approval to play another season after leading the Rebels to Thursday night's College Football Playoff semifinal against Miami. The NCAA a day after Miami's win denied his request.

On that Miami roster? Defensive back Xavier Lucas, whose transfer from Wisconsin led to a lawsuit from the Badgers, claiming he was improperly lured to Miami by NIL money. Lucas has played all season for the Hurricanes and now gets a chance at a national championship. The case is pending.

What to do?

Court rulings have favored athletes of late, winning them not just millions in compensation but the ability to play immediately after transferring rather than have to sit out a year as once was the case. They can also discuss specific NIL compensation with schools and boosters before enrolling. Current court battles include players seeking to play longer, without lower-college seasons counting against their

eligibility, and earning NIL money while doing it.

Ehrlich compared the situation to the labor upheaval professional leagues went through before finally settling on collective bargaining, which has been looked at as a potential solution by some in college sports over the past year. Athletes.org, a players association for college athletes, recently offered a 38-page proposal of what a labor deal could look like.

"I think NCAA is concerned, and rightfully so, that anything they try to do to tamp down this on their end is going to get shut down," Ehrlich said. "Which is why really the only two solutions at this point are an act of Congress, which feels like an act of God at this point, or potentially collective bargaining, which has its own major, major challenges and roadblocks."

The NCAA has been lobbying for years for limited antitrust protection to keep some kind of control over the new landscape and to avoid more crippling lawsuits but bills have gone nowhere

in Congress.

Universities have long balked at the idea that their athletes are employees in some way. Schools would become responsible for paying wages, benefits, and workers' compensation. And while private institutions fall under the National Labor Relations Board, public universities must follow labor laws that vary from state to state; virtually every state in the South has "right to work" laws that present challenges for unions.

Ehrlich noted the short careers for college athletes and wondered whether a union for collective bargaining is even possible.

A harder look at contracts To sports attorney Mit Winter, employment contracts may be the simplest solution.

"This isn't something that's novel to college sports," said Winter, a former college basketball player who is now a sports attorney with Kenneyhertz Perry. "Employment contracts are a huge part of college sports, it's just novel for the athletes."

"The contracts that schools are entering into with athletes now, they can be

enforced, but they cannot keep an athlete out of school because they're not signing employment contracts where the school is getting the right to have the athlete play football for their school or basketball or whatever sport it is," Winter said. "They're just acquiring the right to be able to use the athlete's NIL rights in various ways. So, a NIL agreement is not going to stop an athlete from transferring or going to play whatever sport it is that he or she plays at another school." There are challenges here, too, of course: Should all college athletes be treated as employees or just those in revenue-producing sports? Can all injured athletes seek workers' compensation and insurance protection? Could states start taxing athlete NIL earnings?

Winter noted a pending federal case against the NCAA could allow for athletes to be treated as employees more than they currently are. "What's going on in college athletics now is trying to create this new novel system where the athletes are basically treated like employees, look like employees, but we don't want to call them employees," Winter said. "We want to call them something else and say they're not being paid for athletic services. They're being paid for use of their NIL. So, then it creates new legal issues that have to be hashed out and addressed, which results in a bumpy and chaotic system when you're trying to kind of create it from scratch."

Employment contracts would not necessarily allow for uniform rules with an athlete able to go to transfer when terms have been met. Collective bargaining could include those guidelines.

"If the goal is to keep someone at a school for a certain defined period of time, it's got to be employment contracts," Winter said. □